




## EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

February 2, 2009

  
Julea Ward  
49206 Sonrisa Street  
Belleville, MI 48111

Dear Ms. Ward:

I am writing to document information regarding the informal review meeting that was held on February 2, 2009. This review meeting was held in accordance with the Counseling Program's Disciplinary Policy at the request of your COUN 686 instructor, Dr. Callaway. As your academic advisor, it was my role to facilitate the meeting between the two of you and to document the outcome of the meeting in this letter.

During the meeting, Dr. Callaway expressed a serious concern about your performance in practicum. Specifically, she indicated that you have communicated bias against clients who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual and that you have refused to accept a gay person as a client in practicum with the explanation that counseling gay people about relationship issues violates your religious beliefs. Dr. Callaway explained that the EMU counseling program, in accordance with the ethical standards of the counseling profession (American Counseling Association, 2005), requires that students demonstrate in practicum the ability to consistently set aside their personal values or beliefs systems and work within the value system of the client. She stated that your refusal to see a client presenting with concerns about his gay relationship signified an unwillingness or inability on your part to meet this expectation.

With regard to the history leading up to this informal review meeting, Dr. Callaway explained that the two of you discussed the importance of working within the client's value system and putting your own value system aside two weeks ago in individual supervision. The catalyst for this discussion was your professional disclosure statement and the need to remove from it a descriptor of you as a Christian counselor. Dr. Callaway noted that this was not the first discussion the two of you have had regarding this issue. Specifically, she recounted discussions that occurred while you were enrolled in her COUN 571 course in which she spoke with you about homophobia. She recalls suggesting to you at that time that you carefully consider whether the EMU counseling program was a good fit for you.

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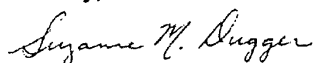
Dr. Callaway indicated that she received an urgent call from you the following Monday in which you communicated distress about receiving a client whose identified issue was a gay relationship. In supervision the following day, she spoke at length with you about the ethical standards of the profession and her expectation that you demonstrate an ability to avoid discrimination and work within the value system of your clients. Because you were unable to resolve this issue in supervision, Dr. Callaway requested an informal review meeting.

It should be noted that, when asked, you agreed with Dr. Callaway's account of what has transpired in practicum. (However, you indicated that you did not recall the conversation that occurred during COUN 571.) You acknowledged that you refused to see a client who sought counseling about his gay relationship and verbalized that doing so would violate your personal religious beliefs. You communicated your belief that your personal religious beliefs are in conflict with the ethical standards of the counseling profession and agreed that this conflict is irreconcilable.

As such, the three of us agreed that the development of a remediation plan would not be possible given your unwillingness to set aside your own value system and work within the value systems of your clients. Given this, I explained the remaining two choices: (1) your voluntary withdrawal from the counseling program; and (2) a formal review hearing that could lead to your dismissal from the counseling program. I indicated that details about the formal review process are available in the Counseling Program Student Handbook. I further explained that some students who have left the program in the past have chosen to avail themselves of an option to complete a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies and suggested that you contact the department head, Dr. Tracy, if you desired additional information about this option.

The meeting concluded with an agreement that you would contact me within one week to let me know whether you prefer to voluntarily withdraw from the counseling program or whether you prefer to proceed to a formal review hearing.

Sincerely,



Suzanne M. Dugger, Ed.D.  
Professor

Cc: Student File, Dr. Callaway

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